SOUTH BRUNSWICK TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS
P. O. Box 181
Monmouth Junction, New Jersey

Minutes of the Board Meeting of October 27, 2025

The South Brunswick Township Board of Education held a meeting on Monday, October 27, 2025. The meeting was chaired by Board President, Mrs. Laura Hernandez.

CALLED TO ORDER AND SALUTE FLAG – Mrs. Hernandez called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

STATEMENT OF ADVANCE NOTICE – Mrs. Hernandez read a statement in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act.

ROLL CALL - David Pawlowski, Interim Superintendent, SBA, Board Secretary:

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mrs. Laura Hernandez, Mrs. Deepa Karthik, Mrs. Julie Ferrara, Ms. Alisha Kahn, Mr. Raja Krishna, Mr. Mike Mitchell, Mr. Barry Nathanson, Dr. Smitha Raj, Mr. Rajesh Soni

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

APPROVAL OF AGENDA – There was a motion by Ms. Kahn, seconded by Mr. Mitchell to approve the agenda of October 27, 2025:

Superintendent Search Team Presentation – Strategic Exemplary Alliance, LLC (SEA)

Dr. Brian Zychowski and Mr. Vincent DeLucia presented information about the process and timeline of finding the new superintendent. They also commended the board for their work through the process. The full presentation is available on the district's website at www.sbschools.org Board Meeting of October 27, 2025.

Mrs. Hernandez also commended the work of SEL during the Superintendent search process. She acknowledged the Administrative Staff and President and Vice President of the teacher's union in attendance.

1 BUSINESS/BOARD

1.1 Approve Appointment of Superintendent of Schools -

WHEREAS, the position of Superintendent of Schools serves as the educational leader for the community; and

WHEREAS, one of the most important responsibilities of the South Brunswick Board of Education is the selection and appointment of its Superintendent of Schools; and

WHEREAS, the South Brunswick Board of Education has undertaken an extensive search spanning many months for a qualified candidate to fill the position of the Superintendent of Schools; and

WHEREAS, through the search, the South Brunswick Board of Education's efforts have culminated in the selection of an individual to serve as the South Brunswick Public School District's educational leader, and

WHEREAS, the Middlesex County Executive Superintendent of Schools has reviewed and approved the proposed contract for the South Brunswick Public School District's Superintendent of Schools.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the South Brunswick Board of Education that *Dr. Bernard F. Bragen Jr.* be appointed as the South Brunswick Public School District's Superintendent of Schools in accordance with the terms of his contract; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the full contract be maintained on file in the Office of the Assistant Superintendent for Business/Board Secretary.

Yes: Mrs. Laura Hernandez, Mrs. Deepa Karthik, Mrs. Julie Ferrara
Ms. Alisha Kahn, Mr. Raja Krishna, Mr. Mike Mitchell,
Mr. Barry Nathanson, Dr. Smitha Raj, Mr. Rajesh Soni

No: None

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT – Laura Hernandez

Mrs. Hernandez said it was a long process to get to this point. She thanked and commended the board for making sure they were available during the process. Mrs. Hernandez said they had a strong pool of applicants, and she is confident they chose the right candidate for South Brunswick.

She commented on some of Dr. Bragen's accomplishments and achievements.

Dr. Bragen has been in the field of education for the past thirty years and served in various positions, ranging from Special Education teacher, Supervisor of Special Education, Assistant Principal, Principal, Assistant Superintendent and Acting Business Administrator and for the past 14 years Dr. Bragen has served as a superintendent. As Superintendent Dr. Bragen worked in Hazlet Township Public School District, Edison Township Public School District in New Jersey and the Montgomery County Public Schools in Virginia.

Dr. Bragen also served as an Assistant Professor/Program Director at Monmouth University.

As the Superintendent of Hazlet Township Public School District:

- ✓ Passed a 43 million construction referendum
- ✓ Created the early college academic program at Brookdale community college
- ✓ Developed a yearlong budget process providing a forum for all stake holders
- ✓ Expanded inclusive programs to place special education students in the least restrictive educational environment, saving the district over $660,000 dollars annually

As the Superintendent of Edison Public Schools:

- ✓ Supervised all school operations for over 17,000 students and 2100 staff members across 19 schools
- ✓ Led the district through the covid pandemic and successfully transitioned all students to remote learning and back again to in person instruction
- ✓ Created a state of the art sports arena used weekly by hundreds of students
- ✓ Created the early college academic program with Middlesex County College, where students graduated from high school with an associate's degree.

As a superintendent, Dr. Bragen also worked as an Acting Business Administrator;

- ✓ Implemented a zero tax levy increase for the 2021 – 2022 and the 2022 – 2023 school years
- ✓ Implemented the self-insured medical and prescription health benefits, saving the district over $7 million annually.

As Superintendent of Montgomery County Public Schools in Virginia:

- ✓ Oversaw school operations for 10,000 students and 2,000 full time employees across 20 schools.
- ✓ Created and implemented a collective bargaining unit with professional staff.

Mrs. Hernandez said they are excited to welcome the new superintendent.

Dr. Bragen thanked Mrs. Hernandez for her kind words. He said it was humbling to see everyone here tonight to support him and he is grateful. He said there is one correction he wanted to share about what the board shared on some of those experiences that took place in his career as an administrator. Mrs. Hernandez alluded that he did a lot of those things; he said he didn't do anything. As a leader and superintendent your job is to put the right people in the right positions to be successful. He said he was very fortunate to work with great people and they did all that together.

Dr. Bragen said he was in Southwest Virginia, the Blue Ridge Mountains it was beautiful, but he missed being in New Jersey. He is grateful for this opportunity to come back and have a permanent position in the school division where he thinks he can add value. He thanked the Board of Education for believing in him and trusting him to lead the district. It is a highly sought out position and he is extremely grateful that they selected him and he is humbled. He said he won't let them down. He also thanked David Pawlowski, for his leadership as the Interim Superintendent and for doing all those things to keep the district moving forward. He looks forward to continuing that relationship as well with all of the central office administrative team. He also recognized all the building principals for all the work they do. Dr. Bragen said in the coming weeks he is looking forward to meeting all the stakeholders, the students, parents, faculty, administrators, community members to get a feel for what is important and what he needs to know moving forward working together.

Dr. Bragen commented when people apply for jobs and get accepted they say things that they are going to do this and that. He asked the board not to take his words as face value, but instead watch and see if he does what he says he is going to do. He said he works really hard to be authentic in everything he does and in his communications. He asked everyone to not believe everything he says today and he hopes they reserve judgement and wait to see if he is going to do what he said he is going to do. Dr. Bragen said the one thing that is most important to him is integrity and his word, absent his three children.

He thanked the board for the opportunity and the unanimous vote and is grateful for this positon and said December 1st can't come soon enough.

Mrs. Hernandez also acknowledged the presidents of the paraprofessionals and secretaries union in attendance.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – Mrs. Hernandez read a statement in regards to Public Comments.

Mrs. Hernandez announced the next schedule board meeting is on October 30, 2025.

MOTION TO ADJOURN – There was a motion by Mr. Soni, seconded by Mr. Krishna to adjourn the meeting at 7:51 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



David Pawlowski
Assistant Superintendent for Business/
Board Secretary